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Summary record of the 32nd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 25 October 2011, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Zelioli (Vice-Chair) ..... (Italy)

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In the absence of Mr. Haniff (Malaysia), Chair, Mr. Felioli (Italy), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 69: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*) (A/66/87)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (A/66/156, A/66/161, A/66/203, A/66/204, A/66/216, A/66/225, A/66/253, A/66/254, A/66/262, A/66/264, A/66/265, A/66/268, A/66/269, A/66/270, A/66/271, A/66/272, A/66/274, A/66/283, A/66/284, A/66/285, A/66/289, A/66/290, A/66/293, A/66/310, A/66/314, A/66/325, A/66/330, A/66/342, A/66/342/Add.1 and A/66/372)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/66/267, A/66/322, A/66/343, A/66/358, A/66/361, A/66/365, A/66/374 and A/66/518)

1. **Mr. Pascoe** (Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs), introducing the biennial report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the role of the United Nations in enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratization (A/66/314), said that the demand for United Nations electoral assistance remained strong, with over 50 countries receiving assistance in the preceding biennium. The recent peaceful and orderly elections in Tunisia were an example of how the United Nations system could provide expertise while respecting national ownership of the process. The Secretary-General had pledged ongoing support for Tunisia's democratic transition, and expressed satisfaction with the contribution made by the electoral team operating under the resident coordinator in partnership with the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

2. The Organization had developed significant expertise in the effective delivery of tailor-made electoral assistance based on national ownership. It usually assisted on request of a Member State, sometimes pursuant to a mandate from the General Assembly or the Security Council; in the latter cases, the Member State concerned was asked to submit a separate request as well. The role of the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, as focal point for electoral assistance activities, was to ensure organizational coherence and political and technical consistency.

3. With respect to coordination, the Secretary-General had recommended giving priority to efforts to improve coherence, predictability, and accountability. The focal point should ensure that electoral assistance projects conformed with the principles of impartiality, sustainability, and respect for national sovereignty and ownership. The assistance must be provided in an integrated manner, and Member States should consider designating the United Nations or another organization as the lead agency to ensure coherence.

4. Turning to the subject of funding, he said that the goal of assistance should be long-term sustainability and national ownership. Member States should fund elections from national budgets and consider making voluntary contributions for electoral assistance.

5. Given the political nature of elections, they could not be dealt with on a purely technical basis; assistance must include mediation and good offices as well. Underlying problems needed to be addressed before elections, to prevent monopoly of power and political marginalization of the opposition, and post-election dialogue and statesmanship were necessary. Public confidence in the process and trust in the outcome constituted the measurement of success.

6. **Mr. Šimonović** (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights), introducing reports submitted under agenda item 69 (b) and 69 (c), said that the report of the Secretary-General on protection of migrants (A/66/253) contained a summary of communications received from Governments on promotion and protection of human rights of migrants, while the report of the Secretary-General on human rights and cultural diversity (A/66/161) contained a summary of comments received on the recognition and importance of cultural diversity. The report of the Secretary-General on combating defamation of religions (A/66/372) discussed the correlation between defamation of religions and intersection of religion and race, and the upsurge in incitement, intolerance, and hatred.

7. The report of the Secretary-General on globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights (A/66/293) discussed the challenges of globalization, and initiatives to mitigate adverse

effects on human rights. The programme of activities for the International Year for People of African Descent was contained in document A/66/342, which recognized their contributions. The report of the Secretary-General on human rights and unilateral coercive measures (A/66/272) was a collection of responses on negative impacts and preventive measures. The consolidated report of the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the right to development (A/66/216) discussed pertinent activities of the Human Rights Office and made recommendations. The Report of the Secretary-General on protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism (A/66/204) addressed recent pertinent developments within the United Nations system.

8. The report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to the International Year of Human Rights Learning (A/66/225) provided information about initiatives undertaken from August 2009 to June 2011. The Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa was described in document A/66/325, which provided an overview of work done from September 2009 to August 2011, and indicated thematic priorities for the period 2010-2013.

9. The two reports of the Secretary-General submitted under item 69 (c) were the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (A/66/343), covering persistent human rights concerns, activities of United Nations entities, and an appeal for humanitarian aid; and the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (A/66/361), which discussed patterns and trends, areas of cooperation with the United Nations human rights system, and the future work of the Special Rapporteur.

Organization of work

10. **The Chair** acknowledged the dissatisfaction of certain delegations and groups with the order of speakers. He called attention to the fact that, notwithstanding pertinent discussions two weeks previously, the order of speakers had not yet been finalized, and was merely an interim list of speakers on a rotating basis without a fixed pattern that had been prepared by the Chair to allow the Third Committee to continue its work.

11. **Ms. Coye-Felson** (Belize) requested suspension of the meeting so that the matter could be resolved.

12. *The meeting was suspended at 3.45 p.m. and resumed at 5.19 p.m.*

13. **The Chair** said that he would withdraw the list of speakers because of absence of consensus. Based on the informal discussions held, he would prepare a new list of speakers for consideration at the next meeting.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.